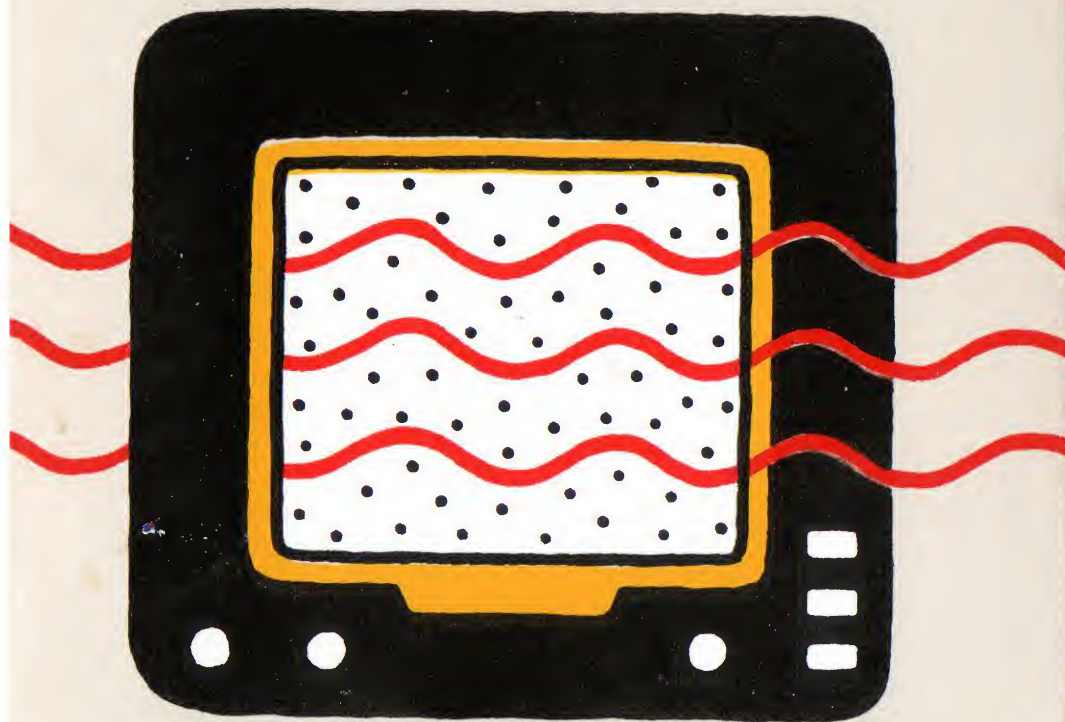


# STONES • IN THE • LAKE



Poems by John M. Bennett  
Drawings by David McLimans

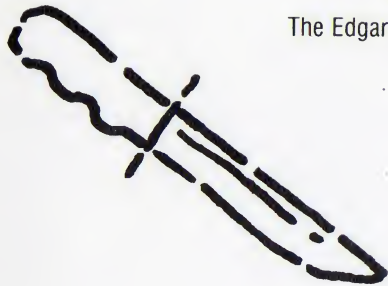
# STONES • IN THE • LAKE



For JWB, KGB, JPB, KC

Credits:

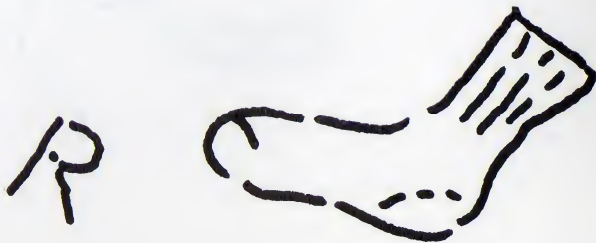
Artcomnet  
The Edgar Allan Poe Messenger  
Blades  
Realities



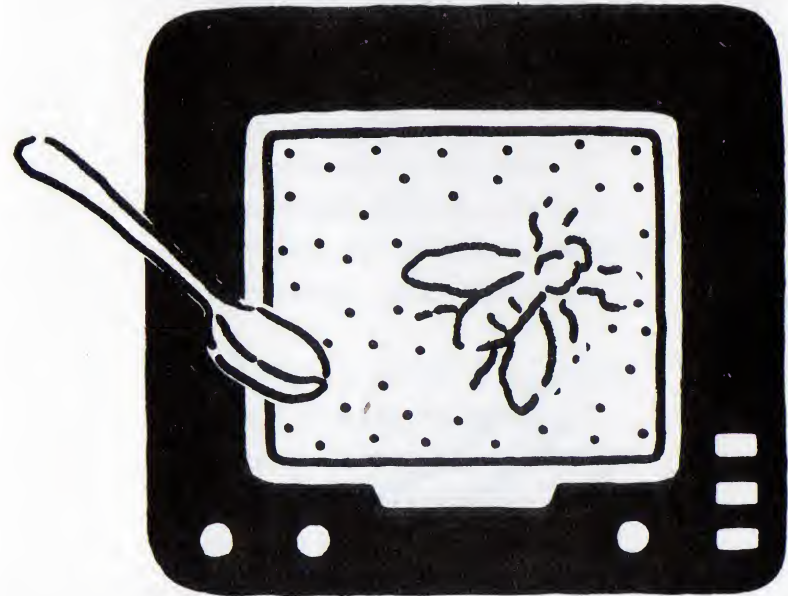
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David McLimans

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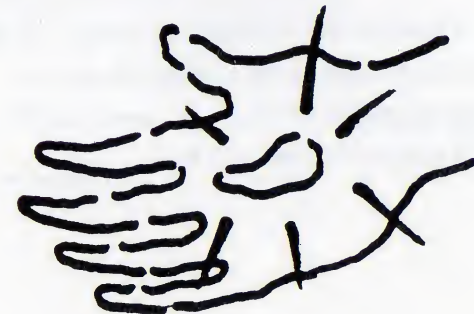


## STONES IN THE LAKE

I was huddled in the blankets  
air pressed the back of my neck I'm  
thinking of the bathroom, of the  
shiny toilet handle, of  
water seeping through the floor;  
my head jerks out and I see my  
shoes slumped beside the bed

I was standing on the flat cold deck I was  
staring at the nervous waves I was  
gripping the slick steel rail and  
locking my eyes on a passing island black  
in the swelling mist;  
I think of a ship plunging into air,  
concrete steps sinking in a cave and a  
stone down there, sweating and flashing with salt;  
a pair of shoes stands empty before it

A dog tooth in my hand I'm on a beach  
looking at the grey lake, the edge  
quivering with smeary points of light I'm  
sleeping, a seagull hangs limply above my hair my  
ankles tilt in stone-rocked shoes





### HIS NOSE

His nose is sailing through the rows of cars it's a  
rock splitting the air which joins at the back of his  
hat he slaps at a fly in his nostril it's  
leading him through a hissing door it's  
tilting his head at a bin of glistening meat  
a numbness spreading in his cheeks

At the center of his thoughts an itching stone a  
sodden anchor, it's not rising loose, he  
dreams him noseless, floating above the  
shopping center, cartops shine like backs of  
fish humping and diving in the asphalt;  
where his nose should be, a jewel of air

"It's a wrecking ball, it's tearing off my face" he was  
leaning eyes closed against a bright pink wall his  
grocery list wet his  
fingers smeared with guts of a fly

### A VACATION

His pants on his head his  
shirt knotted around his feet he  
stands in the closet, groping at the  
mildewed walls; through the  
keyhole, a smear of yellow light

He'd been listening to the meter man he'd  
been skulking behind the door, he'd  
been counting "Gas Man" shouted slowly up the block he'd  
been seeing a key sweating in the lock

He was sleeping in the bathroom  
his head next the toilet  
he dreamt of dripping  
water trickling down the pipes  
a lake beneath the floor with  
3 stones through the flat dark surface a  
pair of new white shoes waits at the edge  
their laces stiff upright in the air

He's waking he's  
lunging for the closet, "The Sock The  
Sock" he gasps, tossing  
mothballs and laundry over his head







I was standing in some woods rotten  
 stumps with young twisted trees surfing up I  
 blurred my eyes and felt the  
 light fluttering in my head; I  
 lie down in the weeds, see silverfish, spiderwebs,  
 shells of seeds and dream me in a tower, high  
 above a lake, a stormwindow hangs off the windowframe

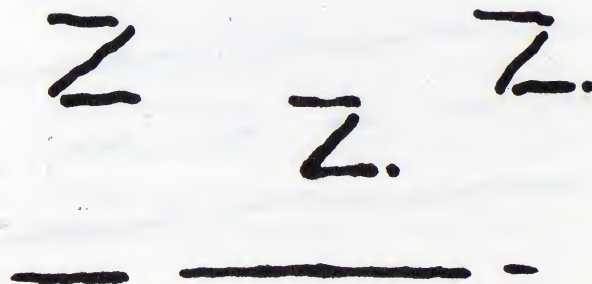
#### MOONHEAD

I squat at the lake's edge a  
 pile of rocks between my feet I  
 look out at the white circles drifting  
 toward the center, think of wading out, my  
 body gone in the swirling brown  
 water lipping at my neck; the  
 whiteness mirrors my sleeping face  
 which is a bleach jug floating there

#### THE LAKE IN THE GROCERY STORE

He stumbles out of the rain sees  
 soggy coupons wadded in a grocery cart,  
 black stains rising up the sides of his shoes, he  
 lurches down an aisle and stops, listens to the  
 white buzz, "The Lake The Lake" he  
 tries to see its grey pulsing body but the  
 light's a wall the floor's a wall the  
 catfood's a wall, it's pressing his water into a  
 tiny dry box, his skin stiff at the edge

He's walking around the lake and he's  
 hitting his foot on a rock and he's  
 walking around the lake and he's  
 glancing at the wide grey swell and he's  
 walking around the lake and he's  
 walking on top of the cliffs and he's  
 stopping at a falling-off tree and he's  
 walking around the lake and he's  
 stepping toward the edge and he's  
 holding his foot over cold wet air and he's  
 walking around the lake

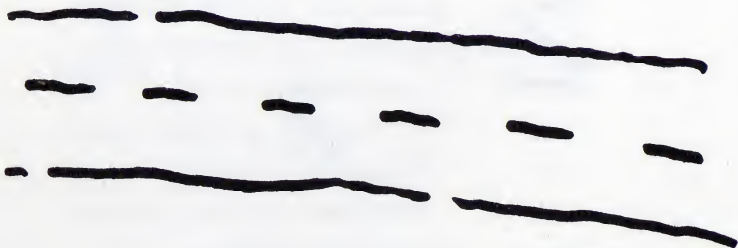


## WAITING IN THE WATER

My feet jerk forward over the damp concrete I  
see a row of men sleeping in chairs I  
stand in front of them, blinking and swaying,  
scanning the walls for a clock, a  
thin grey man snores and bubbles near the hot air duct I'm  
scratching my name on a tiny form I'm  
leaning my head on the flat hard wall

Last night on the toilet I was picking my  
nose and muttering about God, my  
feet were itching, my ass not wiped I  
wanted to yuk at the dogsoap bottle I  
wanted to stand naked at the window I  
wanted to see through the mirror I  
wanted to be a child staring hard at boiling water

The door the sun on the steps the  
cooling tower the  
matches in my pocket the  
bike at the curb the  
red leaves blowing before it



## WORM BOY

I was walking through the woods the  
path went into a hot green room I saw  
stiff fish on the bushes, silver  
bowls floating in air I'm  
trying to walk but my feet are  
snarled in crickets, black and  
pululating around my ankles  
"What's the time?" I thought and saw a  
hill of worms on the path behind me

The mud in my pocket the  
stink of my shoes the  
cuts on my hand the  
buttons jerked from my shirt I'm  
standing near the highway  
flailing my arms at the fence

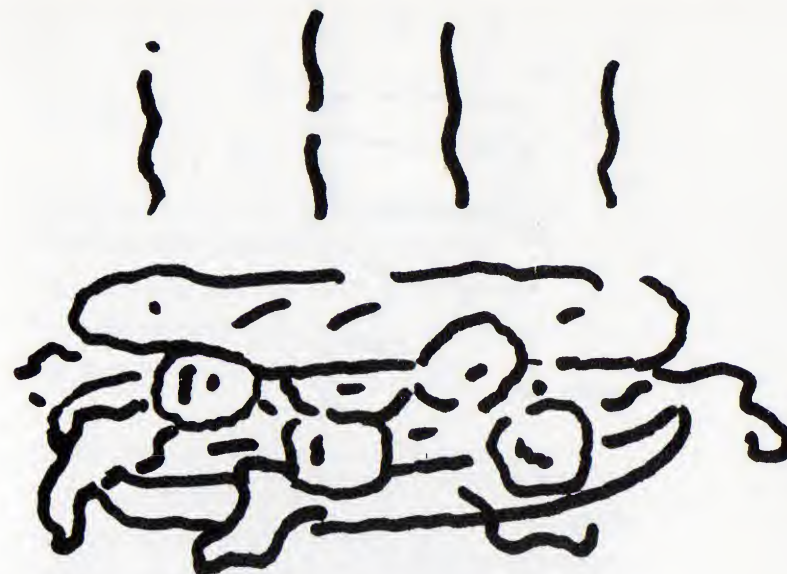


## THE BIKE

He tore open a panel in the attic he  
stepped into the hot black cave saw  
dots of white bright light swimming in the  
roof, he bumped into a heavy sack hanging from the  
rafters, groped its soft dusty lumps and  
stops; hears wasps buzzing under the shingles

He slumps down panting,  
remembers riding his bike as a boy,  
burning above the wheels, a girl closing a  
door, no business open as he  
speeds along the long dark street, the  
cold like a knife in his eyes

A manhole cover was missing in the alley he  
stood beside the cool round hole, heard  
hissing down there, thought of phones hung up,  
radios with the speakers tore out; he was  
dropping a key, waiting for the distant splash



## HASH FACE

Central teeth speeding above blue balls on his  
chin with tit pimple protrusions where the  
eye should be, No-Boy's dressing to kill he's  
got a pocket full of dead horse tongue depressors  
shreds of steel wool sticking from his nose  
"I've been cooling my head in the catbox I've been  
painting meatball sandwiches Will I vomit 1000 times  
before I die?" he stands in front of the door and's  
sucking a deodorant stick, starting to cough, he thinks he  
hears barking on the steps outside, grinds his lips on the  
antchain climbing the wall and heads for the kitchen where he's  
eating cotton wads and stuffing 'em up his nose DRY DRY he  
whisps he's licking his final spit he's cramming a  
dozen cheesespray cans in the microwave and plugging it in





### NO-BOY EATS

He dreams of people falling in a lake he  
dreams him sleeping on a beach and  
squeezing to his chest his socks and  
mirror shades; a shining bowl of  
water sits on his penis with a fork in the  
air above it, he feels the  
knife and spoon on his tongue

There were bees whirling around the dumpster next the  
Meat Receiving sign, he walks  
beneath them, smells the bloodsoaked styrofoam and  
dripping plastic wrap, a wad of  
hair sticks from the crack of the  
basement elevator dock; he  
raises his hand, his fingers comb the bees

He walks through the restaurant door he's  
dripping wet he hangs his sodden shoes on a hatrack and  
asks for a plate of napkins; he  
sits in a corner and grins at them, his  
stomach bloating but not with steak  
nor ice nor gravied taters

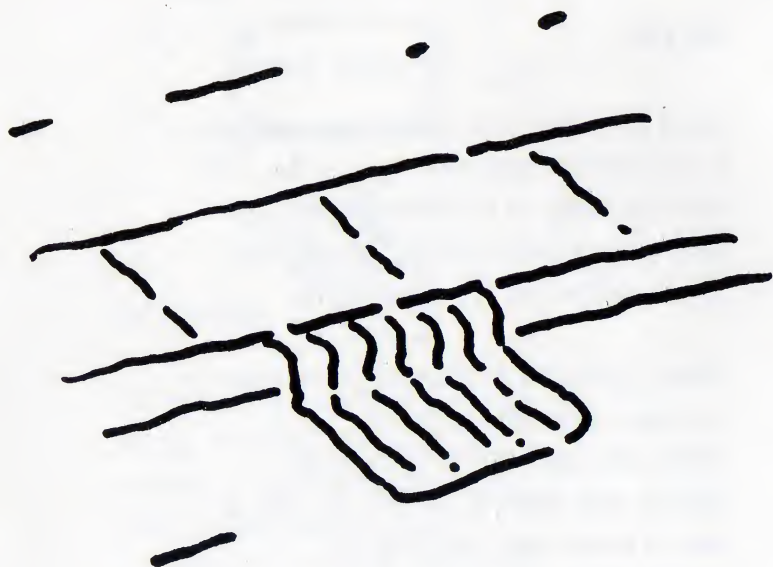
### THE BOIL

Lumps on his head from bumping black walls welts  
on his suckerroed thighs from dancing in the  
dryer he's coffin out styrofoam, slapping his  
ears with the transfers stuffed in; NO BOILING he  
sez, plunging his fists in the steaming pot

No-Boy wants to roll in on himself, put his head  
up his ass, mouth his own dick; he  
wants to be a clock with the hands turning  
opposite, water sinking in the center of a lake; he  
exits the kitchen, tries walking with his  
feet in his hat

He's standing by the garage, he thinks of  
radio towers on the beach, of his  
wife sliding her skin against his; his  
feet are buried in leaves he  
watches a slick blonde car whispering up the  
drive a woman inside is exposing her  
teeth and rubbing the white shiny wheel





### A PICTURE OF SLEEP

I'm crawling into a low mud room where I  
lie on my side, grey  
lumps hang from the ceiling, I  
reach up, feel them slick and soft,  
changing from the touch of my hands  
"This is a painting" I think

Crossing the city on the freeway I  
was close and fast behind a smoking truck, I  
swung to the outer lane and  
saw the sky, low bulbous cloud like  
waves congealed beneath my skull;  
I sped past the truck, I was heading into fog

### FALL IN THE ALLEY

I was scraping hamburger off the porch, I  
was spitting on it, globs for eyes, a  
footprint mouth; in a bag I  
carried the reeking face to a sewer hole, there were  
soggy Jesus books clotted in the gutter and I  
thought of winter, whitening the northern side of town

From the dark mud behind the garage from the  
wet leaves slapping against the siding squirrels  
flicking into a heap of rotting lumber I  
went and stood in the alley, saw  
yellow flames falling all along it,  
light pulsing in the branches getting bare;  
I was hot, the jacket around my neck  
thick and damp, I'm trying to  
walk to the street but my shoes are  
swollen and stuck to the gooey tar, I see  
fire popping and leaping around my pants

I dream me standing on a low platform, the sky was  
cloudy, boiling over slowly the back of the  
grocery store; I listened to the trash compactor  
screech and crunch into silence, saw a  
little boy walking toward me over the gravel, his  
face hidden by a yellow cap, he  
holds out a hammer and saw,  
stops some feet away and waits,  
heavy black smoke pouring from beneath his hat

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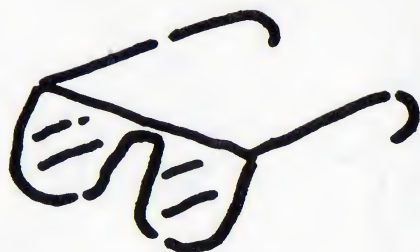


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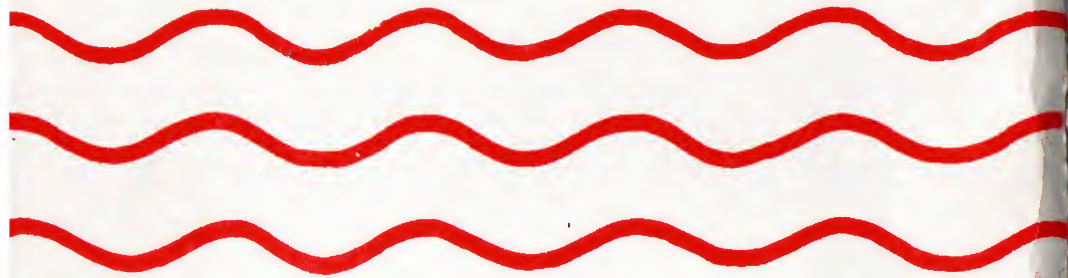




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